

Chair Soto called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Great Hall, Searles Building. Members present: Clr. MacLaren, Clr. Marsan, Clr. Pesce, Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, and Chair Soto.

Acceptance of the Agenda

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to accept

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Valley to move TR-26-45 out of order as the next item after Mayor's report. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Pesce to accept the agenda as amended. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation/Moment of Silence

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilor Pesce read words of wisdom from Amanda Gorman. City Council observed a Moment of Silence for Ross Foucher. Councilor Santos gave the Invocation for the evening.

Public Participation

Cornelius Smith, 121 West Street, said he spoke with three Councilors regarding the issue of the lawnmowers. As an equipment owner and a company owner, leaving a piece of equipment sitting around for six, seven, eight, nine months for an auction, the cost of organizing that and equipment, getting it all at one location, hiring an auctioneer, advertising it and then get pennies on the dollar for the piece of equipment that you'd be better to trade in. Make whoever is selling you the new equipment take the old ones in trade. They are still running. The city is still using them. They can be re-habbed and they can be turned over and reused by another town or a private contractor. If they are put in the corner of the DPW barn, parts of them are going to be missing, tires are going to go flat, belts are going to dry out, and all the leaks that happen now are going to continue to leak. The Secretary of State's office could help you all. If you folks try to even put that through as you have it now, there will be labor laws, labor lawyers just lining up to deal with you. It is an old issue. It has been around for years. Other towns have dealt with it. Take their advantage. Lexington's a great town to review their policy on this. If the equipment sits around it is going to be junk. You will get pennies on the dollar. "And then who's going to show up for an auction for equipment that's been sitting around?" Get rid of it. Get it off your books. Get some money for it.

Linda Bonjourno, 4 Glenn Forest Lane, Methuen, said it is nice to see that the no-shows showed up tonight to see all these people that came to voice their opinion. City Council members and everybody in the audience, we all have families. We all have commitments. Your job is to be here and to be at events that the city elected you to be at. Commitment because you did not show up at the Mayor's speech. Commitment that you do not show up when you are supposed to show up for important voting. But you did not have a commitment when you got a

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free lunch at the library. That way you could stand up and you could wave to everybody and say, "Here I am, but I'm not doing the job I was elected to do." There is no respect for the Mayor or what he is trying to do for the city. Either resign and put people in those seats that know what they are doing, and they want to take care of the city and the people. Let it go because we could find three people to take up those chairs that will do a better job than what you are doing. You are a disgrace to the Council. You are a disgrace to Methuen. Shame on all of you.

Barbara Ell, 79 Lowell Street, Methuen, first Linda said everything she feels, but will add a few more things to it. This is her second time coming up in front of you because she does not feel like you do your job. We voted you in to do a job and you are not doing it. You are not being here representing the people of Methuen on the most important contract that we've had so far and that is getting our trash picked up. It is not just for you, me, or the Mayor. It is every single individual in Methuen. And you are not here to do it. She agrees with Linda. Step down and resign. Thank you.

Dolly Pepe stated she is disappointed. We voted you in. You are supposed to be here. She understands they have families. So, do we. They have other jobs. Then do not do it. They knew they had another job when they took this job. This job is only good for you when you need it, but when we need you, you were not there. Right now, at housing, they are having trouble with trash. First off, there are dumpsters. The rats, great, great addition. But on top of it, to have the fear that it is not going to get picked up, that we are going to have to live with that crud. You have no idea. Come down and see. That is just at public housing. That is not people's lives, their livelihood where they have put money in, buying land and building houses. Methuen is supposed to be on the rise. How can we be on the rise if we are going to have trash everywhere. And if you cannot show up for something as simple as that, what are you doing here? She is not putting anybody down, not taking any one specific person to task. Councilors got this job because they wanted it. They wanted it to make a difference. Make that difference. Be here. When you are supposed to be here, be here. They have other jobs, that is fine. But this is a nighttime thing. And if you know that you are going to be having a special meeting and someone calls it. Then the person that calls the meeting does not show up, come on, be here for us. We are there for you. We have always been there. She is tired of being there and then something as simple as showing up for a vote, ten minutes out of your life. They could have done it. Thank you.

Debra Blood, 63 Woodburn Drive, spoke for disabled people, mature, retired people, and people that are just putting their money aside for certain things. If the trash is going to be picked up privately, then that is going to be an increase for them somewhere. She doesn't know whether it will be taxes, an extra fee, but anytime you make a commitment or any time that you're deciding things to take into consideration the retired, the disabled, the widows, people that live alone. Thank you.

Steven Tarquinio, 64 Sycamore Road, spoke on behalf of his family and residents of his neighborhood that could not make it here tonight to voice their issues with the noise coming

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from the pickle ball courts. However, they have provided him with letters that he provided to Councilor Pesce or they made phone calls to the city that address the impact of these courts and the noise have had on their quality of life. All of them have lived in what was a quiet and peaceful neighborhood well before the pickle ball courts existed or were even planned to be built, some for over forty years. To be clear this is not an issue with the sport itself, but the proximity of the courts to our neighborhood that results in noises which impact our quality of life and violate the Methuen Municipal Code for noise pollution. Last year, he spoke multiple times on this issue at council meetings, pleading to the city to close the courts while providing scientific data about pickle ball noise issues. The city instead chose to leave them open while procuring and installing noise mitigation panels but have not done anything to stop the sound given the flaws in the court design which he provided in his summary presentation package to this council in advance. That was \$24,000 of taxpayer money that was wasted while they had to suffer through an entire summer of dealing with these noise issues. Since the courts have opened this year, they are back to where they were last year. The sounds can be heard in their house. They cannot open our windows during the daytime or enjoy a peaceful backyard. In addition to the noise issues, the neighborhood is now dealing with harassment from players over at the courts blaming us for the operating hours and even swearing and screaming at neighbors that they should move. A police report was filed to document one such incident that included videos from both the high school and the neighborhood as evidence. In the numerous letters he provided here tonight, Council can read the common themes about previously peaceful households now filled with non-stop popping sound throughout the day, as well as having yelling and profanity from the courts now being a part of their backyard and disrupting their daily lives. In one of these letters, a mother of three that works as a nurse is now unable to sleep in the daytime when she must work a night shift due to the constant noise. In addition, she is unable to let her kids play in the backyard due to the yelling and profanity coming from the courts. These are people the Mayor criticized last year for choosing to buy a house in the neighborhood despite them doing so before the courts ever existed at a time when the neighborhood was quiet and peaceful. Methuen is not a unicorn. There is nothing unique or special about Methuen with this issue. He has two local cases to assist with the resolution. After dealing with the same issue during the same time period in houses in the same proximity to the courts that they have, the town of Kittery, Maine, made the decision last month to closet their courts and acknowledged it was a regrettable mistake to build the courts close to residential property. A professional sound study that the town paid \$10,000 for determined that pickle ball courts should not be built within 500' of a residential property. In addition, they determined pursuing any mitigation measures were not guaranteed to stop the noise and would be a waste of money. The Kittery Town Council chairperson said: "It's unfortunate that we're choosing to do this, but it's in the long-term interest of the people who live around that court." For comparison, they only had two courts causing the issue. We have six courts worth of noise simultaneously and we have over 20 houses within 500' of the courts. The same issue happened in Falmouth, Mass, but the town chose to fight the neighbors which led to a lawsuit against the town. A court injunction shut the

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courts down followed by the town choosing to settle the lawsuits and permanently close the courts. He has obtained the services of the same law firm and have provided them with the entire history in all correspondence with the city on this issue. They have agreed with the neighbors' assessment and to represent them if we choose to go that path. The summary package provided points out numerous flaws with the court design. Fixing those courts will not be a cheap effort given all the issues. There is no simple and quick fix that is guaranteed to stop the noise. And spending any more money without a well thought out plan that includes supporting studies and guidance from experts would continue to waste taxpayers' dollars. It's not a popular decision to close the courts, but he is asking each of them to put themselves in the shoes of all of neighbors dealing with these noise issues and to please prioritize the long-term interests of the people who live around the courts over a recreational activity. Mayor Beauregard, Councilors, Solicitor's office, he came here to night requesting again please shut down these courts immediately until we determine a path forward. Do not allow pickle ball to be played on the tennis courts. Find a new location for pickle ball courts away from any houses and update the city noise ordinance to prevent any pickle ball courts from being installed within 500' of residential property. The neighborhood has been peaceful long before the pickleball courts ever existed. We are simply asking for the same peace to return. Thank you.

Linda Soucy, 10 Kirk Street, Methuen, spoke about the issue of the trash services and the \$850,000 related to the tipping fees. At this point, it is important that to focus on being practical and moving forward. The cost did not appear out of nowhere. It was reduced last year to help balance the budget, but the reality is it is still a necessary expense. Avoiding or debating it now does not change the fact that we owe this money. We see this pattern in other areas as well, like snow removal. We often budget a smaller amount even though we know the actual cost will likely be higher. These are essential services and underfunding them upfront only brings us back to the same conversation later. It also makes our residents and seniors anxious about not having their trash picked up. It makes our vendors worried if Methuen is going to pay their bills. This is not a good look for the city. She suggested that they acknowledge the reality of the situation, pay what is owed, and move forward with clearer planning. Let us budget more accurately going forward so we can avoid repeated shortfalls and the frustration that comes with them. This is not about placing blame. It is about being honest about our needs and making responsible decisions for the future. Lately, there has been a noticeable increase in conflict playing out on social media. Personally, she does not know social media. She is tired of the little snippets that people keep sending to her phone. It is creating division, frustration, and a sense that we are moving further apart rather than coming together and working as a city. There is a reason she does not have social media. She respectfully asked everyone, residents, leaders, and participants alike, to consider a pause. One month, just be off it for one month. During that time, if they choose to use social media, let it be for sharing something positive about our city, something constructive and community building information only. This is not about limiting anyone's voice. It is about resetting the tone in Methuen. It is about giving our community a chance to breathe, to refocus, and to engage with one another in more productive and respectful ways. Many people have

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expressed that they are tired of the negativity and the back and forth. They want solutions, not conflict. They want unity, not division. We all share this goal. Thank you.

Kathy Woekel, 133 Swan Street, spoke about a guardrail issue that may be of concern to somebody else who is going to speak this evening. She was notified by a Councilor that finger pointing might be happening. She came to take ownership of that and read messages from seeclickfix. It will be the trail of what happened regarding this guardrail that was installed. On April 22nd of 2024, her seeclickfix says “heading away from Pelham Street on West Street, there are three areas of concern on the right-hand side of the road. These areas, two of which are around ponding water, while the third is just after number 125 West Street that has an awful drop should you miss the road. This area is also collecting standing water at this point. She recommended guardrails at each area. All three drop-offs are dangerous. Based on the comments on that seeclickfix item the city moved it to Stephanie of DPW on that very same day. Seeclickfix and her do not agree on how she can find anything and there are no directions anywhere on how she can find anything. She could not find her original complaint. On June 22nd of 2024 she reposted, heading away from Pelham Street on West Street, there are three areas of concern on the right hand side of the road, two areas are around ponding water while the third is just after #125 that has an awful drop should you miss the road. This area is also collecting standing water at this point. She highly recommended highway guardrails at each of these areas. All three drop-offs are dangerous. This was previously submitted on April 27th, 2024 with assignment to Stephanie. No action, no reply. She cannot find it on seeclickfix. She would love it if someone could give her directions. The comments on seeclickfix entry reflect on the same day, 6/22/24. It was assigned to Stephanie of the DPW. Stephanie updated it two days later. DPW assigned this issue to the Director of Public Works, 6/24/24. On October 8, 2024 Stephanie/DPW assigned this issue to Felix Garcia, Jr., and there it sat. She contacted and spoke to the Mayor that day. While he was on the phone with her, he sent something to Felix and then Felix updated it on October 8th of 2025, a full year later she is still pursuing this. Felix writes: “good morning Kathleen, we are going to check the standing water on West Street. We are also at the vicinity of 125 West Street. We are going to locate the drop. From there, we are going to see what corrective measures we need to fix the issue. I will follow up with what we find. Time went on. Time went on and Council came in. She reached out to Clr. Valley because it is in her area and asked her if she would pursue the issue on behalf of all residents in the city. At the time when I started in 2024, there was significant ponding in all three locations. They did come out and install a guardrail at the most significant, crucial area. There are no houses on both sides of the road. This was resolved. There should be no finger pointing at Clr. Valley. It was at a residential request for safety and concern of all people that drive on that road. When you go down it tomorrow, you will see it all dried up because that is what happens over time. Where that guardrail got placed, if you went over it, your car would be sticking up nose to feet. Thank you

Councilor Valley thanked Kathleen for pursuing this issue. She is if she is getting any heartache for what was done but it was done for care and concern for all the residents. Thank you.

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Lisa Gomez, 301 Longwood Drive, spoke on the trash. Two weeks ago, she went around her neighborhood with a trash bag and picked up anything that was loose and flying around. She personally does not care for this trash company ever since we got them. They dump the trash. If it hits the street it sits in the street. Where she is on a dead end, it flies up into her flower beds and she is constantly picking it up. She has been there 59 years and still thinks of Methuen as a town. She does not call it a city. She sees it as a quaint little town. The trash must be picked up. Right behind her is Big Lots and that is a constant dumping ground. She is called seeclckfix and have them pick up tires, pick up furniture where the China Tea House was. We already have an issue with people leaving big items places because they do not want a fee to put on them for having the town pick it up. She does not know how much you could do this, but she asked if there is a way Methuen could buy trucks and have our own trash through the DPW picking up our trash. It is just a thought. It must be picked up because she is seeing more and more trash being left around and the thought of them not picking up our trash is going to be a nightmare. Thank you.

Jack Burke, 49 Canobieola Road, said he supports what TO-26-13 is trying to accomplish, codifying nepotism protections in Methuen is the right thing to do and appreciate that the Council is taking it up. He asked Council not to vote on this ordinance tonight. The draft before them, even with its current revisions, has problems serious enough that adopting it as written would leave the city worse off than taking more time to get it right. He has reviewed the ordinance carefully and shared some of what he found. A Councilor stated that the ordinance arose from a complaint about summer jobs. The language as written does not unambiguously cover seasonal, temporary, part-time or contract positions. The ordinance deals with nepotism but should expand to include cronyism and clientelism which have similar results on a democratic process. The ordinance never defines the word “department”, the single term on which this entire hiring prohibition depends. Without that definition, no one could know with certainty what the ordinance covers or how it will be applied. The police and fire department are exempted from the core prohibitions. That exemption may be too broad, and it creates a troubling two-tier system with the largest uniform departments operate under different standards than everyone else, creating an unfairness in employment that is being unanticipatedly added. The school department, the largest employer in Methuen with more employees than any other department is not mentioned anywhere in this ordinance, not in the prohibitions, the exemptions, nor the definitions. It simply does not exist in this document. This is not a minor oversight. It is a significant gap in a document that has several significant gaps. There are some existing overlap processes which were not considered here and should be discussed, and applicability decided. There is no enforcement mechanism of any kind. No consequences are stated for violations. There is no complaint procedure and no investigative authority named. As it stands, this ordinance tells people what they cannot do but provides no means of holding anyone accountable if they do it anyway. A detailed written analysis of these issues has been prepared with AI assistance consisting of four documents, a 19 page gap analysis, an 18 page disclosure form coding for the IT department, a 7 page non-technical description of the disclosure form, and

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an 11 page record retention and destruction process. It addresses the gaps and omissions in the ordinance before you. Any Councilor who would like a copy of all those documents can request such from the Council Clerk. He has sent the clerks copies to distribute upon request. He is asking tonight is a process that matches the importance of the subject. He asked the Council to table this ordinance, convene a public workshop to review a stronger revised draft and invite the school department, the police department, and the fire department to participate in that process, not as opponents of reform but as the entities most directly affected by whatever the Council ultimately adopts. Methuen deserves an ethics ordinance that works. He asked the Council to take the time to write one. Thank you

Dan Thibeault, 28 Burgess Street, said he is embarrassed that he must come here and talk to Council about the trash. The money is in the Free Cash and should be transferred over. Once a week, after garbage is picked up in his neighborhood, he walks the neighborhood picking up garbage that has fallen out of the trash. "Is that his job?" "No" What is going to happen if we allow this transfer not to happen. Everyone needs to think about this seriously and if they cannot do the right thing, get off the board.

Organizational Business – None

Chair Soto commented that the Council meetings are twice per month, chosen by the body and scheduled ahead of time. Our Council meeting schedule is available through our clerk's office. Those are set for the Council. If the Mayor schedules a special meeting as he did in the past couple of weeks, there was an emergency special meeting and the meeting last week. Those are meetings called by our Mayor, not the Council.

Reading and Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meetings April 21, 2026 regular meeting

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Santos.

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley to table the minutes because it does not reflect the Chair's statement to the Mayor regarding social media posting and she understands it should be amended. Seconded by Councilor Santos. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Councilor Simard asked for clarification. Councilor Valley repeated her reason for tabling. He said he did read something about that, but Councilor Valley is saying it was not complete. Chair Soto said the Mayor's response should also be included.

Proclamations/Correspondence: None

Consideration of Appointments:

Kevin Barry Promoted to Deputy Fire Chief

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor DiZoglio to approve.

Chief Toto stated this promotion is a contractual obligation not a new position. It is without reservation that he recommends Kevin Barry for the promotion. He holds the highest position on the promotion list and no candidate has been bypassed. Chief Toto read background

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information on Kevin Barry including years of service and promotions, degrees, community outreach, family info to name a few.

Councilor Drew said he spoke with the Chief earlier. The city is required to have four deputies, three Captains, and 20 lieutenants. This is a position that we need to have to ensure the safety of men and women on our fire department as well as contractual obligations.

Chief Toto responded, yes, there are four deputy chiefs. Each one runs a shift, four shifts to cover 24/7 coverage. It is a contractual obligation that we need to have one deputy chief and every vehicle needs to have a lieutenant and two firefighters.

Councilor Drew to the Mayor and CAFO said all of these are fully funded into the upcoming budget.

Mayor Beauregard responded, yes, that is correct. Just to address a question that he is heard from some and it speaks to perhaps some confusing titling used in the budget. This is not, for instance, like the deputy police chief. They have a Chief and a deputy chief in the department. The Chief alluded to each deputy chief overseeing four shifts. It is not comparable, for instance, to the similarly titled position in MPD. It is fully funded in fiscal year 2027 and he will be moving forward with-it assuming Council support.

Chair Soto as Mr. Barry is promoted to deputy fire chief, she asked if there is a chain of command that follows as far as promotions.

Chief Toto said he is going from lieutenant to deputy chief. There will be a promotion for lieutenant for the next meeting

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Kevin Barry thanked the Chief, the Mayor, and the Council.

Chair Soto declared a brief recess. Upon return members present: Clr. MacLaren, Clr. Marsan, Clr. Pesce, Clr. Santos, Clr. Simard, Clr. Valley, Clr. DiZoglio, Clr. Drew, and Chair Soto.

Presentations/Projects/Department Updates: None

Mayor's Report

Mayor Beauregard clarified that he called the special meeting last week. That was not something that was called by Council leadership.

Tonight, with the Council support, we will be moving forward with what is called a "property assessed clean energy program" here in Methuen in partnership with Mass Development, better known as PACE. This is a great solution to a few issues. A lot of our commercial buildings are aging, and energy costs are high. Upgrades often do not happen because the upfront cost is too big. PACE helps fix that. It allows property owners to finance energy improvements, efficiency upgrades, solar, water systems, resiliency work, and pay it back over time through a property - based assessment tied to the building. There is no cost to the city, no cost to taxpayers. Private capital comes in, buildings get upgraded, operating costs hopefully able to come down, and those properties become more competitive. It is a win across the board

and it's exactly the kind of economic development tool we should be using to support our city's businesses and help grow our commercial tax base. That is on the agenda tonight and he hopes Council supports it.

Special education cost is one of the biggest pressures in the entire school budget. We see it every year. Council will see it when they receive the proposed budget later in the week. It is one of the biggest pressures in the school budget aside from transportation costs and contractual obligations. He plans to move forward, along with the Acting Superintendent, with an RFP for a targeted review of the out-of-district special education tuition system. This is one of the fastest cost growing centers we have, and it has been this way for a very long time. To put it into perspective there are individual placements that can exceed \$500,000 dollars per year, depending on the level of services required. Across the entire system, the district is spending millions annually with outside providers to meet these obligations mandated by law. These are services we are legally and morally required to provide. That is certainly not changing. But when costs reach this scale, we have a responsibility to understand exactly what is driving them and determine whether there are more sustainable ways to deliver the same level of support. That is what the focus of the review will be on. The scope is straightforward. We want to look at overall costs trends and where they are headed. High cost placements and the primary drivers behind them, how we are using outside providers and collaboratives and whether there are opportunities to potentially build more capacity, in district or regionally. This will be done in coordination with the school department using the identification using the de-identified data. It is not about individual students. The aim is not to second guess placements. The goal is to simply understand the system and the reforms it needs at a deeper level. And this is something that is across the Commonwealth. Families should hear what he is saying. Clearly this is not about a discontinuation or even a discussion of discontinuing services. They will continue. As he referenced, these are legally and morally required. Taxpayers should also understand how significant these costs have become and why and that is where the conversation should go next. The School Committee and the Finance Sub-committee have started talking about whether it makes sense to invest in bringing more of these services in-house so we can do it effectively. There are some significant challenges with this. Upfront cost for one but beyond that we are not where we need to be in terms of special ed staffing and we do not have the structure in place today. In some cases, our staff does not always have the licensure we would need to deliver certain services in district. There are some real constraints and if we are serious about changing the trajectory in the context of special ed costs, but also as we look at all of these other cost drivers, these are issues that we are going to have to address. We cannot kick the can down the road any longer. If we can deliver the same level of support to the home with more control over quality and costs, he thinks that it is better for students. It is better for taxpayers and the review is going to give us the foundation to make those decisions using real data. He wanted to share that with the Council before he goes through the process of posting that because he is sure it will raise some questions.

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Another budget buster is health insurance. Right now, we are running at about a 110% loss ratio. For the sake of illustration that means for every dollar collected in premiums, the city of Methuen is spending \$1.10 in claims. Its driving annual deficits in the health insurance trust fund and that is not sustainable for the city. We need to deal with it. While we are in ongoing conversations with the PEC he is asking for the health care resolution that would allow the city to have the option to seriously consider more sustainable cost savings solutions, like potentially the GIC to be added to the next agenda. It is either been tabled or left on the table during recent meetings. But it is important to keep this conversation moving. We should be actively exploring every possible option with talking with the PEC about rate changes and some other potential structural adjustments. They are discussing ideas like the health insurance buyout to incentivize people to get off the city's insurance and onto another plan for instance, we can collectively debate what the right answer is but, the status quo is not working and all of the options are on the table. It would be great to see that resolution on the next agenda. He will follow up with the Chair about the best way to get it done.

Circling back to Economic Development – he recently signed off on a formal agreement with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission to work with them on launching an industrial zoning working group. The next meeting will be taking place in the coming days. We are working on comprehensive reforms to our zoning ordinance to help make Methuen more economically competitive. We already have one of the lowest commercial tax rates in the region, but our zoning ordinance is not as user friendly as it should be. It needs to reflect and be compatible, not only with the modern-day economy, but also with the merging industries. This is the key to unlocking much of the economic opportunity along Route 128 along with municipalities in our area like Andover and Lowell. He will continue to keep Council posted on the working group's progress. Council should expect a deliverable by way of a modernized industrial zoning ordinance once our agreement with the MVPC runs its course, towards the end of the summer.

School Committee member, Alejandro Biaz, stepped up and worked with the youth center and several department heads and organized the City of Methuen's very first job fair. It is a terrific way to connect young people to job opportunities, especially summer jobs offered by the city. This will be a great tradition to continue and expand upon in the years to come. Congratulations to member Biaz on a job well done.

Congresswoman Trahan will be visiting the Arlington neighborhood this Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. The Council is welcome to join them. We recently submitted a request for the funding for the next phase at the Arlington Infrastructure Project, and the congresswoman agreed to include it on her list of projects funded with help from the federal government.

The arts, culture, crafts, and music festival will be held at the Senior Center on Thursday, May 14th, starting at 10:00 a.m. They are celebrating 42 years of service to the Methuen community this month. We will be joined by the Secretary of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Lunch will be provided by Romanos Pizza. The Happy Hearts Chorus will be performing at 1:00 p.m.

Councilor DiZoglio said when he was on the School Committee, one of the reasons why the city bought Branch Street was to open classrooms to possibly bring back certain special ed things that we sent out-of-district. But, funding, etc. fell by the wayside. Plus, there was a need for added classrooms in some cases. He asked: "Is there any way that we can, with enrollment a little bit less than it was, is there any way that we could apply for grants in the near future to bring back those special ed so we could start doing it in-house and actually receive money from the state instead of paying it out to other districts?"

Mayor Beauregard said this is something they are actively exploring with the School Committee. The Finance subcommittee has discussed the prospect of making an ask in fiscal year 27 regarding the constellations program. This is something that had been explored in years past but due to funding issues had never been pursued. In essence, that would provide for an in-house school program for special ed. It would be a significant upfront investment, but it is something that potentially could generate a good return on that investment over the next several years. The intent would be to try to bring people back in district. Again, that would require a significant upfront and we would need to come to the City Council for that level of funding for that program. It is something that is being discussed. Beyond that, another thought that is on the table as well is the prospect of making Methuen a school choice community. We often will pay to send students to Andover, as an example, the municipalities that we send students to. One thought is to potentially explore whether it would make sense, whether we have the staffing and resources available to become a receiving district rather than a sending district. He spoke recently to the Mayor of Newburyport and they were talking about how they were putting school choice funding that they must use to offset school funding. It is something that we would likely have to adopt state provision or something like that. The next step is to look at the constellations program, which we are looking at as well and the prospect of becoming a receiving district in the school choice.

Councilor DiZoglio said as a school committee member, he was against school choice, because if he is correct, nothing against that. We cannot even fund our special ed program now. If we open ourselves up to school choice, we may open ourselves to receiving more kids for special ed because other communities may not have a strong special ed program. If he is correct, that is what would happen. We have tough staffing already. If we were to add more, he just wants to be cautious going down that road. Unless you have the staffing, you will burden all the special ed people that we already have, and they seem to be burning out at both ends of the candle right now. That is why he was against it the last six years he was on school committee. because you just open it up to adding more to that and more caseloads to our special ed program. He just wants to be aware; he is hoping the school committee understands that as well. Let us go through these other programs before we do that part. That is all he is asking.

Mayor Beauregard responded, absolutely, that is exactly the reason it has not been done. This is a year which we are having conversations collectively as a school committee but also this is a conversation we will be having with the Council about some structural reforms that we can ultimately chase after with the goal of generating revenue and helping to address the budget

issues. It is kind of a never-ending cycle here where a lot of the staffing problems that we are dealing with. Circle back to funding and yet to make an investment that would generate additional funding, we run into the issue of staffing. It is an unfortunate merry-go-round but never-the-less a conversation worth having. He will be mindful of the issues raised.

Councilor Marsan said he spoke about the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. He asked if the Mayor would consider having him (the Chair of the Economic Development subcommittee) to be part of that group so he can keep the committee informed and work together to maybe help.

Mayor Beauregard said that would be fine. It would ultimately require Council approval. Having the input of the Council would be helpful.

Councilor Marsan we are re-writing what is applicable throughout each zone and all the new types of businesses that could be here in our city. Mayor Beauregard agreed.

Councilor Drew commented the Mayor said it is a significant cost regarding special needs in our schools. He asked how much. We might have to spend money to make money. If this is going to be some sort of revenue savings in the long-term, yes, we might have to put up two/three millions dollars but in two or three years we'll see that savings break even and eventually become positive. He asked: "How do we get that going?" It is not exactly looking great on the balance sheet, but a lot of different costs have risen by 25%. It is significant. We must figure out how to curb that. "How much when you say a significant investment are, we are talking?"

Mayor Beauregard explained, regarding the current system as it exists today, he did a check of Munis late last week and tallied up all of the lines that dealt with special ed tuitions and it is just shy of eighteen million dollars in fiscal year 26 for special ed tuitions. Looking at fiscal year 27, just for the sake of illustration, for one school we are going to likely be paying 3.5 million dollars for thirteen students to receive special ed services. If we were to invest in constellations, he looked at this with the Acting Superintendent Miss Bosak, and it would require an upfront investment of 2.7 million dollars just to get the program up and running. The challenge though this is the factor to consider. That is simply to get it up and running. There is no guarantee of precise savings, given the fact that the students that we are required to serve they have a wide-ranging array of needs that must be met. Ultimately it is something that we need to look at. It speaks to one of these critical areas that is in desperate need of structural reform. He hears from residents all the time who ask, "where does all my tax money go?" It goes to these most significant cost drivers, whether it is health insurance. We keep talking about that. We talk about the school budget in the context of special ed costs, transportation costs, contractual obligations. When you look at the budget once it is formally submitted to the Council, they will see that the budget is made up primarily of these significant drivers of costs. Ultimately therefore he thinks we really need to look. That look is long overdue. We have a lot of systems that we are working with that will require major reform. We have a lot of work in front of us.

Councilor Drew you are saying about 2.7 million to get it off the ground. We cannot ballpark a five-year plan and see where the breakeven point is.

Mayor Beauregard said that would come as the result of a review along these lines. That is why given the fact that we need to be having these conversations about these reforms. It is important to have the data to back that up and to have a formal look at forecasts and the like so we can determine a path forward.

Councilor Drew said he knows this isn't an FY'27 fix. This is a 28/29 fix. He understands that. As for the GIS the Mayor brought up, there is a significant pushback from every employee that he is spoken to in this city. There is a cost savings that your projecting but there is a buy in that we must do, all these other items. He does not know why that is such a drum to be beaten if there are so many people that are going to hate it. A lot of them live here in the city. A lot of them have worked for the city for a long time and to take away any sort of, he doesn't want to say perk, but to have a good system that they receive as an employee, to take that away. Methuen is not exactly an easy place to work in. We are not an easy community at all in every part of our lives. This seems to him like a very difficult thing. He asked: "On your GIC, what do you anticipate as a cost savings that is driving this so hard?"

Mayor Beauregard explained at the time the city was under state oversight, Sean Cronin brought in a group of consultants to look at that. And back in December of 2019 so now were talking roughly six years ago. The consultant that Mr. Cronin brought in found that a switch to the GIC would produce a savings for the city of roughly three million dollars in the context of health insurance. That was back in 2019. We would likely need to bring in a consultant to look at things in a modern-day context. In terms of his own communications with the unions, one of the main concerns relates to the ability of bargaining involvement he would say among the pieces as it exists today. It is important to take note that many municipalities provide their employees with insurance through this mechanism, including the City of Lowell, City of Lawrence, City of Haverhill, City of Malden, many other cities. Malden anticipates three million dollars in savings in insurance. There was a time when municipalities were not willing to get on board with this insurance. However, this year there are thirteen municipalities in the Commonwealth that are making the switch. This speaks to the health insurance challenge that municipalities across the Commonwealth are facing and we talk about, for instance, the issues with the health insurance trust to switch this type of system would allow the city to never have to worry about that again. We talk about how we need structural reforms. We need to get after opportunities to maintain the services that we provide for sure but also do so in a way that is fiscally responsible. This is an example of something that we should at least look at and a vote on that resolution, in favor of its adoption, is not a vote to force the city to dive straight into this program. What it would simply do is allow for the button to be available to be pushed somewhere on the municipal government dashboard. Given the fact that we are in a position that is not unique to Methuen we need to be looking at every possible opportunity to save money in the context of some of the systems that we have. When we look at special ed, we look at all these different factors. We look at health insurance. It would be irresponsible of him to not at

least ask the Council for the opportunity to explore additional savings and reforms. That is an obligation that he has.

Councilor Drew said the Mayor mentioned health insurance trust fund. He asked: “Have we historically funded the health insurance trust fund adequately/appropriately to where we are supposed to be every year for the last X number of years?”

Mayor Beauregard said the challenge that we have is that we routinely go well over claims spent. We have a 110% loss ratio. Last year it was at 106%/109% and that would require us during budget time to potentially budget for between 110% and 120% of claims spent which is outrageous. At that point, the question that he would have for the Council is “Where would you want me to cut those millions from?” “Would it be from the schools?” “Would it be from essential services?” Those are all things that he does not think anyone would want to touch to fund that. This speaks to we’re going to talk about trash later tonight, a reduction he had made for the tipping fees of \$500,000 in tipping fees last year was done at a time when we were looking for each and every penny we could in the proverbial couch cushions. The question he would have is if anyone were to disagree with the \$500,000 reduction he would simply ask hop in a time machine, go back to the budget last year, and tell him how many teachers we would be looking at laying off to cover that, how many firefighters, how many police officers, how many DPW workers would we have to look at.

Councilor Drew said he agrees that there would have to be cuts and he understands. Historically, you are saying that we have had to spend an extra ten percent, twenty percent more into the trust fund that we have not funded to this point. Mayor Beauregard agreed.

Request of Councilor DiZoglio to reconsider TR-26-45 A Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of \$850,000 from Free Cash to Be Transferred to DPW Solid Waste Disposal Expenses to Fund Necessary Tipping Fee Expenditures (Requested by the Mayor and CAFO) (EPA REQUESTED)

MOTION BY: Councilor DiZoglio, seconded by Councilor Simard to reconsider TR-26-45.

Councilor DiZoglio said his job as a Councilor s to make sure his constituents are taken care of and well off. That is why he is offering to reconsider his vote. People have called him, and he is stepping up to put this forward as a reconsideration to ensure that the people of Methuen are taken care of. That is his job as a Councilor. He is willing to do this.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: 8 yes, 1 no (Clr. Santos)

TR-26-45 A Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of \$850,000 from Free Cash to Be Transferred to DPW Solid Waste Disposal Expenses to Fund Necessary Tipping Fee Expenditures (Requested by the Mayor and CAFO) (EPA REQUESTED)

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Simard to adopt.

Point of Information – Chair Soto said there was a discussion with the Mayor on this having to have an EPA. She asked if this is considered a first read once the vote is reconsidered.

Solicitor O’Neill responded, no, this would be for passage depending on what the Council chooses to do with it. When it is reconsidered, it is still a second read. It would not need an EPA, but it is fine if Council wants to add an EPA.

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Mayor Beauregard said his understanding is that the first read vote failed. A failed first read vote would not therefore qualify as a first read. That is why out of an abundance of caution they are including the EPA.

Solicitor O'Neill said Council can attach an EPA, but the first read is really when it is filed. Either way. It does not hurt. If we are concerned, we should add an EPA to it.

Chair Soto said the reason she wants that clarification process procedure, in the future if this happens again, she does not want to have the confusion on the floor of – it came back on a reconsideration. Now it is considered the first read again. That would mean we would have a third read. She would like the clarity on that.

Solicitor O'Neill said it is not a first read.

Councilor DiZoglio said he would like to recognize representatives of Harvey.

Mike Kuzmich, District Manager for E.L. Harvey came to the podium.

Councilor DiZoglio said, as you heard early in the audience, people coming up worried about their trash not being picked up possibly in the next few days, next week. He asked: "Did Harvey ever say that to the City of Methuen, that they were going to stop trash operations?" "And when was that exact date you were going to stop operations?"

Mike Kuzmich said they did not say it. He found out on social media just like everybody else last week.

Councilor DiZoglio said one of the major problems that he has had was the extra barrels. He has recently found out that there are people paying for those fees and others not paying fees. The question is he is hearing there's (and he does not know the number). He asked: "How many extra barrels?" "Is it a 1,000/2,000?" He needs to know the extra barrel count.

Mike Kuzmich said they do their extra orders by truckloads in this industry. A truckload goes by the size of the barrel. The 96-gallon barrels are bigger. You can fit 712 of those in a truck. The 65-gallon barrels are a little shy of 1,000 (964). Methuen received five extra loads of barrels, approximately 4500 as a conservative number.

Councilor DiZoglio said when this program started everybody got one barrel. Response, yes. Councilor DiZoglio said so you are telling me that since then if someone ordered an extra barrel, this would be the truckloads that you are talking about or are there repair barrels. He just wants to make sure he is being honest about what he is asking. These extra barrels are for the second barrel that people are ordering. Response, yes. Councilor DiZoglio continued and said there is a possibility of 4500 extra barrels that people have at their houses.

Mike Kuzmich responded, give, or take a few. 4300/4500, somewhere around there. Councilor DiZoglio said if he is correct and it is a \$100 per barrel annual fee, you are looking at \$450,000 of fees that should be coming into the city.

Mike Kuzmich responded yes.

Councilor Valley asked if the City of Methuen is currently behind on any invoices.

Mike Kuzmich responded no.

Councilor Valley said the city does not owe anything to Harvey now?

Mike Kuzmich responded no.

Councilor Drew said he appreciates Harvey coming to discuss this. This is a discussion about a transfer of funds from Free Cash to cover a bill. As much as we want to go down the road of figuring out the problems, we know that. We know that there is an issue with barrels that we need to collect fees. We know that there is a tonnage issue that we have that we need to collect fines. At the end of the day, going through our budget and what we have remaining, he went through line by line, there is about thirteen million dollars left to spend in this year's

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budget. All this is any money that is not spent out of our budget as of July 1st drops to the bottom line to be Free Cash. All we are doing is keeping us from having to go line by line, moving a \$1,000 here, \$20,000 her, \$5,000 here to just pay the bill. We are just moving one time, \$850,000 into the reserve for the solid waste to be able to pay the bill. If we only spend \$700,000, the remainder drops to the bottom. This is standard, how business operates. At end of the all of this just drops at the end. If there's money in here that is not spent in the Senior Center or is not spent in the library or is not spent in the DPW, all that goes to the bottom. We can sit here and ask Harvey about the 4500 barrels and finding our \$450,000. We can do that absolutely. That is what we hired the person to do is to wrap their hands around that process, handle the fees and get that squared away. But regardless of what it is, we have to have in our hands, by July 1st, the money to be able to pay all of our bills because after that FY'26 closes, and we can't move any money. This is a standard business thing, a standard transaction. He does not know why all of this is continuing to be a problem. We have a problem that we need to fix an issue with our fees. We have a problem that we need to fix with our tonnage. We can do that but let us do that going forward. None of this is relevant to moving the money from Free Cash to the solid waste.

Chair Soto as the reconsidering vote called Harvey up to the podium potentially taking advantage of them here and asking the questions, he felt it prudent because he is reconsidering his vote. If he does not ask those questions and he does not feel comfortable voting yes today, that is the vote we rely on today. She understands the Councilor's point and it is appreciated.

Councilor Marsan said the 4500 barrels is a huge number and should let the Mayor speak on the motion.

Chair Soto said she spoke with Ben Harvey on April 30th over the phone, same concern her fellow Councilor had regarding an outstanding bill. "Are we going to be shut off on service?" As you can see, our residents' cortisol goes from 0 to 1,000 thinking that they are not going to have garbage picked up. She understands Mr. Mayor leaving this meeting with not having that transfer passing, we have been a knee jerk reaction on line saying: "Oh my God we are going to be without service." and that is actually not the fact here. Ben Harvey, they own the company and have been doing business with us for fifteen years, was very graceful on the phone and said that you also do other municipalities and that you would never shut our service for any municipality unless the Mayor would pick up the phone and do that, which she doesn't think he would. There is a question to the CAFO, and it is something that he mentioned was the citywide collection of curbside single stream and trash is prebilled for the month. She saw with the back and forth the CAFO had with the Council that we budget that pre-billed amount for the whole year. Our pickup is basically paid for balanced in our budget and it is going to be paid for. What he did further explain was that at the end of the month the single stream recycling and trash is billed after the totals are calculated at the end of the month. For example, we are billed \$274,000 a month for garbage pickup. That is billed at 30-day net. Once you pick up all the garbage from April now you have an overage number. That gets added onto the bill.

Mike Kuzmich agreed.

Chair Soto said that bill is due but our basic service needs are budgeted and the CAFO said in an email that the remaining amount due is already encumbered in this budget line. Therefore, did not need to be included in the projection. The conversation for this evening is about projected costs. This tipping fees, she is always on the side of do not under-save these line items, snow being one and garbage being the other because it is the one uncontrollable in our budget. She understands that. She asked: "Is that \$850,000 truly the number that is going to

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take us to June 30th or is it \$250,000 or \$400,000?” It is hard for her to think that it took us this long, to the meeting of April 21st to figure out that we needed \$850,000. Her hope is that we need less. “Is it truly the \$850,000 because we are saying projected?” She has asked it before and has not gotten a number from the CAFO. She specifically sent an email asking what would carry us to June 30th, 2026. She has not received a response. She asked the Mike Kuzmich from Harvey if the \$850,000 is the number.

Mike Kuzmich responded it could be, but it is a number that fluctuates. Disposal is different.

Mayor Beauregard said to clarify, there was an email that came to him and it is on the city server, where there is a clear outline of arriving at the cost of \$850,000. That message was sent to the Council. He was not aware that any representative was going to be called before the Council tonight. He never said, at any time, that there would be an immediate shutoff of trash services. He warned that if ultimately, we do not pay this bill that we are going to have to pay there is going to be \$850,000 to get us through June 30th then we risk the prospect of disruption of service. It had been mentioned that somebody on the Council reached out to Harvey and asked if they would shut off trash pickup and they said “no”. We must pay. They will probably share that they rarely have to shut off services to municipalities but that’s because municipalities will pay to have the trash picked up. If we do not pay that cost, we are not going to be able to get a service. If you were to follow that line of thinking to this logical conclusion then he might as well and he says this in jest, he zeros out the trash line item that was in the budget because even if there’s nothing budgeted they’ll still pick it up. He wants to be very cautious of insinuating that they will continue to pick up trash if we do not pay the cost that we are going to owe. He stated the same exact thing has happened in years past, when we get to this point at the end of Q3 start of Q4 where we are running these projections for the end of the year, they routinely come to the Council whether it’s for snow and ice expenses, tipping fees, you name it. this is anything that is new. It is being treated as something that is novel in this context, but this is something that is done on an annual basis. It would have been ideal if we had had the full projection included in the budget. But the issue and he is stated this, there was a \$500,000 reduction to help maintain other services in the budget. There was an additional cut beyond that which he and the CAFO had suggested was not a good idea. They knew that they would have to come back and take from Free Cash to cover this amount. Madam Chair was the only “no” vote against that cut. Another factor he must address is the issue of additional barrels. All of this is set up through the OpenGov system. Residents can log onto OpenGov, request additional barrels if they meet certain criteria. For instance, household size threshold, they can qualify for an additional barrel. That \$450,000 number is not even close and accurate because the city does not charge for the recycling barrels. They charge for the trash barrels. He would have to get that specific math for Council but to insinuate that \$450,000 could potentially be floating out there to collect when it comes to these barrels’ fees, that is not true. Beyond that, he referenced this during the special meeting, where we talk about a renewal process. If you look at the trash ordinance that was passed in 2024, at no point anywhere in the ordinance is a cart renewal system even contemplated. There is a reference to violations relative to the ordinance but there is no mention of any type of renewal system. That is something we would have to correct going forward with an amendment to that ordinance because ultimately when he speaks about the administration, they are able to facilitate that ordinance as its drafted they can’t draw outside the lines and go above and beyond that system as established collectively between the prior administration and

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the Council. He wanted to share a couple of clarifications before any narratives take hold that somehow, we are owed \$450,000 in barrel costs. That is not accurate.

Councilor DiZoglio said he is just trying to understand how. He was not here last year and is willing to do what is right for the city. He understands the Mayor's messaging but to his constituents as well he was told, he had people calling him up saying that they thought their trash was not going to be picked up tomorrow. He is just trying to clarify to people. He knows we must pay this bill. You can't not pay your cellphone bill and hope that Verizon does not turn off your cellphone. He understands that. He is also looking at the barrels and you are right. He has checked the ordinance. He is putting an ordinance together to amend that because he realized that. If people are going to pay for an extra barrel, he looks at it as a privilege because we are trying to keep that tonnage down. He is hoping with the new sanitation coordinator we are going to enforce the fines that we have as the Mayor said at the special meeting. Also, at the same time, from his understanding of the ordinance trash barrel lids are always to remain closed. If you drive around the City of Methuen, that is not the case. For people to say, and he also wants to defend Harvey in some ways, their job is just to lift the trash. From his understanding as well is they are not supposed to be picking up trash barrels that have overflow. He asked the Mayor if that is correct.

Mayor Beauregard said he did not have the ordinance in front of him but there are various provisions in the ordinance that address that. Specifically, to Harvey, we have a contract that outlines these provisions as well.

Councilor DiZoglio said he wants people to understand if they are being told to dump the trash and people have an overflow, trash get all over the place. He feels that if we enforce the ordinance the way it is, with lids shut. He keeps the trash lid closed and the trash does not get dumped everywhere. We cannot always blame the company. We need to blame individual homeowners as well for not shutting lids. He is reconsidering his vote and will be a "yes" vote tonight. He wants people to understand the situation of hesitation and why we are trying to fix this because hopefully next year we don't get an \$850,000 bill, hoping the fees and the fines that we enforce can be put in a revolving fund to keep it down so if we have to Free Cash next year, he doesn't expect it to be paying a bill of \$850,000. If we could get it done for \$400,000 from Free Cash, then he has no hesitation on it. He does not want it to be a repeat next year.

Mayor Beauregard responded absolutely and thanked Councilor DiZoglio for his effort to reconsider. Tonight, we have an opportunity to get this done, put it behind us, and we will be able to do it.

Councilor Marsan noted Council talked trash for three meetings and talked every angle of it. He does not think anyone has ever said they do not want to pay the bill. His point is he does not like taking it all out of Free Cash. He does not have the answer of where to take it from. He does not know if we take half of it now and revisit it in a month if they would be in a different situation. They would be closer to the end of the fiscal year. All our numbers from the different departments we would have a better grasp at that. That does go into Free Cash if there is an excess. They made the mistake last year of cutting this number. He wished the perception did not get out that the city was not picking up trash, but it did get out there. That was never their goal. They must pay this bill and must come up with it tonight. He does not know if the pleasure of the Council is to cut in half and does not know if that is a worthy proposal to put on the table. He spoke with the CAFO about it today. He has been torn with it as far as doing it. He is not making an amendment to cut it. They must pay this bill. He does not know if there is any feasible way to cut it other than Free Cash. They cannot go down here again. They know

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they are not going to but he wished the city would have implemented the structures that they had put in place last year in the Mayor's terms "to get after it" but they didn't and can't go back.

Councilor Pesce said her vote was "yes" to the transfer but doesn't think anyone who voted "yes" is in favor of moving Free Cash so freely. It needs to be done.

Councilor Pesce said she does not think they should have cut the amount last year at budget meeting. The language in TR-26-48 gives us more structure going forward so that we are not hit again with this massive number. She agrees with Councilor Drew and understands Councilor Marsan. It needs to be done but at the same token Council needs to put provisions in, so it does not keep happening. She does not know if TR-26-48 will do that one hundred percent but at least it is a step in the right direction ensuring that there is some accountability. That is why she sponsored it when it originally came forward.

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Drew to substitute with the language outlined in TR-26-48 and include after monthly reports the language "and invoice reports".

Councilor Simard asked the CAFO if that would add extra work for her.

CAFO Duprey said these are things done on a day-to-day basis. It would not be any extra. They would be sharing work they already do.

Chair Soto asked if that would be a standard item on the impact statement.

CAFO Duprey said she could do that or just provide it under the CAFO report.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Solicitor O'Neil said the Mayor is correct. It goes back to first read because it failed at first read. It will need either two votes today and at next meeting or an emergency preamble if Council chooses to pass it tonight.

Councilor Pesce asked without the EPA does the city risk any interruption doing this on a regular voting cycle.

Mayor Beauregard recommended adopting an EPA to get this done tonight.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE MAIN MOTION as amended UNANIMOUS

Mike Kurmich said his site manager Matt has been out here since 2011. He knows the city and the people here. He apologized for the individuals in the crowd that have experienced poor service. It is not who they are as a company. It is not who their employees are. He also apologized if he insinuated any sort of 4500 count situation. He was just trying to answer the question he was asked. Their goal is not to let this look like they all went on strike. That is not what they want. He knows that is not what the residents want so they are trying to avoid that at all costs.

MOTION BY: Councilor Simard, seconded by Councilor Drew to approve EPA.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE: UNANIMOUS

CAFO Report

CAFO Duprey said she did respond on April 23rd. She had highlighted that somewhere on the summary that Council can find on the financial impact statement which items were specific to pick up. If you look at the second page of the impact statement, there is a line called "Harvey Pick up trash" projection. It is \$727,694. Two lines down, its "Harvey Pick up recycle

projection” \$143,019.54. Those two numbers together give you the number she was projecting as far as pick up trash/recycling.

Chair Soto said “you mean that the adage, not the base picks up. CAFO Deprey indicated that was correct. That is just tonnage. Chair Soto asked how she determines that projection.

CAFO Duprey explained she has a tracking spreadsheet with the different types of trash tonnage and trash types that are tracked monthly as the bills come in. She took the actual tonnage for these different types by type for the first six months of the year and got an average of how much we are taking in for tonnage and got an average of those individual pieces. She used that average and used that to project forward on the months we have not paid yet.

Chair Soto commented that is interesting to her. As we know Christmas is a very busy time and you have Spring cleaning. “Why not go to previous years and look at what the usages were?”

CAFO Duprey indicated they looked at that as well just to see trend wise. They trend differently each year. The fluctuations that we see in the first half of the year they see in the second half of the year too based on the prior years. They felt that the first six months with the fluctuations some months are higher, some are lower. It would reflect a good enough gap for the other half of the year.

Request for Update on Searles Estate Expenses (Req. of Clr. Soto) CAFO Duprey said she did not get a chance to address the Searles Estate Expenses. She should have the reports Tuesday or Wednesday and will get those out before the end of the week.

Chair Soto said she is aware we have ongoing expenses there like utilities. She wanted to know when the insurance was due. They talked about every six months it is \$100,000.

Chair Duprey explained the last report included the most recent insurance and we will not have to pay again until fiscal year 27.

Councilor DiZoglio asked if we know the exact balance currently in our circulation.

Mayor Beauregard said it is 1312 for trash. He must get the recycling number.

Councilor Valley said she emailed the CAFO asking about the grant funding positions breakdown and did not receive it.

CAFO Duprey said she received the email. She has been in and out of the office last week and in budget meetings and has not had a chance to catch up on emails. She will send that to Councilor Valley this week.

Requests of Councilors

- Echo Lane Sewer Connection – Update on the proposed sewer connection for Echo Lane, including whether there is a tentative schedule for when the project will begin, so residents can be kept informed (Request of Clr. Valley to the Mayor and DPW Director) DPW has requested a proposal from a consultant for design and permitting. Keep this on the agenda to follow up and share next steps.
- Request for the Report done by the State on the Oakland Avenue Bridge (Req. of Clr. Santos) Director Bower sent the inspection report to Councilor Santos today. We will

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fund the repairs on the short term through the CIP. The contract will be on the May 18th agenda for the repairs. The bridge is on Mass DOT's list for replacement but the timetable for that is unclear at this point. The state delegation namely Senator Pyano and Representative Reyes have been extremely helpful. The goal is to fix the bridge and bring in an engineer to confirm that its safe for passage before its reopened. Even though we do not have a timetable for total replacement, we are in the process of fixing the bridge deck. That will be on the next agenda so that work can get done and have it safe for travel, pending the state's replacement.

- Update on the feasibility study for the public safety buildings and DPW Councilor Santos
- Status of New Trash Barrel order delivery and distribution

Update where we are with collection of fee for second and third trash bins residents purchase. Specifically, on year 2,3,4, and how many are out there? (Req. of Clr. Marsan) (Req. of Clr. Drew) The new barrel order arrived. Distribution is ongoing until they get through the list of requests regarding additional barrels. Individuals paid for them through Open.gov. We do not have a framework for renewals and perhaps we can work on that.

- Update on construction project on Lowell and East Capitol Street when it will resume and expected completion. (Req. of Clr. Marsan) most of the work will be done by the end of this month. We are following through with that timetable with the vendor. The only outstanding issue beyond the work that needs to be finished there this month is the paving. That is scheduled for August. There will be a gap between when the drainage will be taken care of and the paving. The paving will be done by the end of the summer.
- Parks Audit RFP status update - Councilor Drew There is no progress on that. Keep it on the agenda. Speaking of parks and recreation we have the pickle ball issue under Requests of Councilors.
- Buildings Audit RFP Status update - Councilor Drew
- Pickle Ball Court Concerns – Councilor Pesce/Councilor Drew
- When it comes to this issue, he is heard the comments made tonight and has been in touch with email on and off with Mr. Tarquinio. The Mayor said he spoke with Councilor Drew about some ideas that are being discussed in the context of parks and recreation subcommittee on it. he is all ears for solutions. Councilor Drew mentioned he visited the neighborhood and heard the issues, and it is something that we are reading about happening time and time again across the country. We need to get a handle on it. He is completely supportive of solutions proposed by the subcommittee. Superintendent Angelo wants to deal with this once and for all as well. They will be in touch with the subcommittee so they can get some progress and actual solutions there.
- Request to Chief MacNamara – 2-hour parking in the downtown area and feasibility of extended parking (Req. of Clr. DiZoglio) Mayor Beauregard said he has not been involved in this. Chair Soto said the Chief did call regarding the two-hour parking. He is not here this evening. Councilor DiZoglio said there was a business that he and Councilor Drew passed out flyers for the St. Patrick's Day parade where an individual that owned a business told them they were constantly being harassed regarding the two-hour parking and that he and his employees were forced to move their cars around. They went to Bada Bings and they felt the same way. He then went to certain businesses along that area. That is when he met Michele, which she said no. But her customers when they must do their hair for three hours, they must run out, move their cars around. That is why

he got the idea of asking people around with the down-town area, asking random questions to random people that he sat down with. Some said yes some said no. instead of passing an ordinance he brought to the Council for discussion. Councilor Marsan had brought it up that it was hard for them to get the two-hour parking down there. That is why he said he was not getting an ordinance. He would rather see what people do. Social media brought it to the attention that he was trying to take the two-hour parking away. He wants to make sure every voice is heard in Methuen, that is brought by multiple people, people that thought yeah maybe it would be great to have two-hour parking removed. But until we do that, he would rather go through a process. If it comes back, then we leave it alone. If not, then we will have bigger discussions. He does not want to affect any businesses down there. He wants to make sure we bring businesses in and have more conversations. He feels this is a long process. He has no intentions of changing this overnight.

- To Council – Discussion Revitalize Lowell Street Bridge (Req. of Clr. DiZoglio) The Mayor said he has been in touch with Councilor DiZoglio regarding the Lowell Street Bridge especially since we are looking into the 20th anniversary of 9-11. It is something that we need to discuss further. Councilor DiZoglio said he went by Patriot's bridge while walking downtown and he saw the memorial. Because of the 25th anniversary and that fence looks like it needs a makeover. He and Councilor Drew were talking about repainting the whole bridge red, white, and blue. Councilor DiZoglio had said just the fence but he said let us do the whole bridge. Councilor DiZoglio feels the city should redo the memorial area, refurbish it, make it better, brighter and see what we can do.

Councilor Marsan referenced the two-hour parking and said it took so long to get that years ago to resolve. Now that we have residents there, if we do not have some sort of parking, they will be overnight parking from the residents, no spots to park for the businesses. We really need to investigate this before we change anything. He is glad Councilor DiZoglio is saying to investigate it before we just say we are changing it to pacify one or two people. We have got to make sure we are doing the right thing for all of downtown.

Councilor Drew said, for the record, he does not want to paint the bridge red, white, and blue. As for pickle ball, they had a Parks and Recreation subcommittee meeting tonight. They came to some ideas. He noted Councilor DiZoglio and he went down on Saturday down to the resident's house and heard the very aggravating noise. They stood in the driveway for thirty minutes. He feels bad for the people that are twenty-five feet from those courts. They have heard people say, "well, they shouldn't have moved there". A lot of these people have lived there for twenty-five years, never complained about the tennis courts that were there. It was not until this happened. Most of them were fine with the tennis. They were fine with the baseball. They were fine with the buses because they knew what they were getting into. This pickle ball issue is something that is affecting the quality of life on residents down on that road. We need to do something serious to mitigate that sound. The resident is here and wants us to shut this down now, which is something we could do. But then it becomes, the people that are using it, they do not get to use it. But then he does not get to use his yard. There is something that must be talked about in the subcommittee about changing hours, talked about making all the courts reserved, talked about trying to require soft noise pickle ball paddles. All these different things are out there. We have a little more to do to get to a solution. We need to find something for the residents down there because it is a significant nuisance that we need to correct.

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Councilor MacLaren said she had email correspondence with several constituents about this issue. It is pressing. She is personally trying to put herself in the shoes of having a noise like that outside of her window all the time, especially children. There are young families in this neighborhood. She is not going to sit there and say that she knows what the answer is any more than Councilor Drew off the top of their heads. But, it's definitely something that they need to look into extensively because it is deeply unfair, especially to constituents who have lived there for decades and like Councilor Drew said never put up a fight when it was less imposing with the tennis courts. Now, clearly, they are only saying something because it has become such an issue. We owe them, paying attention to it.

Councilor Valley referred to the Echo Lane RFP. She asked when that will be posted. She said she had a conversation with DPW on Thursday and they were unaware of that.

Mayor Beauregard said he received word on that from the Director on an email along with the Deputy Director. He does not have the exact date. That came directly from DPW leadership.

Councilor Marsan commented, pickle ball, we say we are going to something, we are going to help them. But, "What are we going to do? How are we going to? Is the subcommittee going to handle it?" "Are we going to handle it?" "Is Parks and Recreation?" We have not given any resolution. We are just saying we are going to handle it. "But, how are we going to handle it?" "Do we have any consensus on that?"

Councilor Drew said when he spoke with the Mayor this afternoon, they talked about speaking with the Parks and Rec department. They are going to change the hours. They are going to implement the reservation system for all six courts and figure out how the paddle component works. They must work with Steve Angelo to take care of this.

Mayor Beauregard clarified Councilor Drew and he had this discussion before tonight's meeting. He has not had the chance to speak with Superintendent Angelo on many of those thoughts. Councilor Drew said they spoke briefly during the subcommittee. The Mayor said he had not had those conversations yet, but they will prioritize this. It is something that has been an issue for far too long.

Councilor Drew said they are trying to do things that is not going to cost money up front. Fix the things that we can right now for free and we need to put a study in place to do an actual sound study of what is there because what they have for sound barriers is not enough. He will have a request for the sound study together for the next meeting.

Chair Soto commented the sound barriers were expensive.

Councilor DiZoglio said he met Steve last summer and if you go down there, it sounds like a missile is going through the neighborhood. It is unbearable. One of the residents that he spoke to they cannot even use their outside porch anymore because of the noise. It hurts. Also, the nurse that has three kids, she cannot sleep, and the language being said. The resolution seems like it is months down the road, which then Mr. Tarquinio said he got attorney representation. He does not want this going to court when we could solve the problem before it gets to that point and they shut down the courts. Then the city is out of money for that. He asked: "Would it be easier to shut down the courts until we have studies come in, have people come in with expertise to make that court better for the neighborhood?" That might aggravate people who like using the court. But at the same time the residents were there first before we put the pickle courts in. Methuen, what they do not put a plan in to see how it affects everybody and then it costs us money. Before we get to where it is going to cost the city more money, let us shut it down. That

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is the easiest, but it is the hardest. At least Sycamore Ave residents will feel like we are trying to solve the problem instead of brushing it along with where it could take six more months for our solution to take place. The residents would have to endure the whole summer of that sound going back and forth. We should find easier solutions.

Councilor Pesce said she did not think any solution is easy. "Have we looked in tandem with any of these efforts that we've done at alternative locations?"

Mayor Beauregard said he did not recall discussing any alternative locations.

Councilor Pesce said she is very weary although she appreciates the subcommittee's efforts for noise barriers and the like, she is very weary of spending more money on something that is probably not going to mitigate the sound.

Director Angelo said unfortunately we are not going to be able to eliminate the sound. He is happy to look at alternative locations and can work with the Mayor's office on that. It is not something they have proactively done.

Councilor Pesce commented pickle ball is a very hot trend right now. She does like the ideas that Councilor Drew was mentioning via the subcommittee discussions. She asked if residency of the users are verified.

Director Angelo responded: we are not as of right now. There are reservations on three of the courts. It was discussed during the meeting today an all reservation type system, while requiring those to be Methuen residents only. It was not discussed at great length but is something they could investigate.

Councilor Pesce said, in lieu of closing them completely right now, she would suggest putting stringent time restraints on it. She would not be that gracious with it. She would find a happy medium. Maybe either side is not going to be completely happy. But maybe afford the people who enjoy playing pickle ball at least some time and allow our residents on Sycamore to enjoy their hours as well at their house. It appears even trying to enforce these hours its trickling longer and they have been altercations and other issues arising from it.

Director Angelo said is a battle they have been having about enforcement. Personally, he has been going down to the courts at 8:00 p.m. during the week to ensure people are clearing out. Unfortunately, he cannot be down there seven days a week. This weekend they had DPW staff there. He spoke with dispatch to have the police go through and try to enforce it. If they want to alter hours they can. That is a conversation he can have with the Mayor's office and work on different things. Enforcement is the key to that. We need to make sure someone is there. If we are not there at closing time, people are not going to abide by it. You need to have someone down there.

Councilor Pesce said she is talking really limited hours before a permanent solution, especially on the weekends.

Director Angelo said he would leave that up to this body and the Mayor's office. This is a conversation that could be had.

Mayor Beauregard spoke to the residency question. They were there for the grand opening of the courts. He was surprised to hear from people who were there, in some cases were from Somerville or from other municipalities because apparently there are nice pickle ball courts in the area. There were some that were coming from the Boston area. It seemed to be something attracting people to come to Methuen, potentially benefit the city in other ways. If they are coming to play pickle ball perhaps, they are also stopping at Starbucks on their way to or from. There is a potential benefit to local businesses. Nevertheless, he also understands the concept of, okay look if we are going to limit it to Methuen residents these were built intended for the

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benefit to the Methuen residents. That is something we could look at. Another idea was limiting Sunday hours starting at noon or something like that on top of anyone who would like to use it would have to register. Beyond that, limiting people from playing unless they had some of those sound eliminating pickleball equipment. There is a host of ideas that are being discussed. It is something that is a long overdue issue that we need to get a handle on. They will be doing that in partnership with the Council.

Councilor Pesce said instead of keeping it the way it is and working on limiting the hours, we are better off (at Clr. DiZoglio's request) to stop pickle ball now and then slowly implement the hours back. The residents need some sort of reprieve at this point.

Mayor Beauregard said this is something that can be discussed. He does not want to commit to a course of action without having discussed this with our Superintendent of Parks and Recreation. This is not all kind of coming to fruition as a conversation about some of these ideas tonight.

Chair Soto suggested that the body work on a resolution to present to the Mayor. Council still has two pages of business.

- Update the Swan Street and Jackson Street Sign – Councilor Ryan DiZoglio Director Bower mentioned that this is something that Mayor Perry had requested. The estimate at that time was \$7,500 to get it done. They would need to identify the funding source. Once they can get with Director Bower on that, they will have more to share.

Public Service:

Grants: None

Licenses: None

Contract(s): None

Other Officers and Committee Reports

Councilor Drew indicated he would report on the meeting held today in two weeks.

Councilor Simard, as Chair of the Veterans' Committee, reported that HR Director LaGreca contacted him today, ahead of tonight's meeting to give an update. To date, there are four applicants for the VSO position. They are reviewing the applications now and the posting will remain open until filled.

Councilor Marsan reported that the Economic and Development Committee met last week. They talked about the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and how they are going to help us with the zoning. They spoke about ADUs and how they are becoming more applicable and how we can work with them and how we can work with small businesses when we help them get into the city with licensing and permitting. Chair Soto encouraged this committee to look at the PACE program that is on the agenda this evening.

Unfinished Business

Resolutions:

TR-25-75 A Resolution Approving the Request of JR Builders, Inc. for the City to Approve the Lay Out of Cooper Lane for the Purposes of Accepting Cooper Lane as a Public Way (Sponsored by JR Builders, Inc., Owner and Developer) (Request of Clr. Marsan to remove from the table) No Action taken

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Chair Soto reminded the Council that the Joint Meeting will be held June 10th at 6:30 p.m.

TR-26-42 A Resolution Requesting the City Implement a Seasonal Restroom Policy for Non-City Use of City-Owned and City-Operated Athletic Fields (Sponsored by Clr. Drew, Clr. MacLaren, and Clr. Valley)

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Pesce to approve.

Councilor Simard asked Director Angelo if he was contacted when the complaint was made before this resolution was drafted.

Director Angelo said he was aware.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-43 A Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of \$42,500 from General Fund Accounting Personal Service Expenses to General Fund Accounting Other Expenses to Appropriately Fund Expenditures for Grant Writing Services (Requested by the Mayor and CAFO)

MOTION BY: Councilor Pesce, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve.

Councilor Valley commented she fully supports the grant writing services. This is something that she was advocating for almost a year that was under the Mayor's request. But she would like to review the contracts and the terms and conditions with this new firm because this looks to her like the sanitation coordinator position that was created in FY'26. Ten months later, the position is not filled yet. "Is it possible to see the contract and the RFP as well?"

Mayor Beauregard said the RFP was public and can be provided to the Council. In this context for the grant writing services, in the FY'27 budget, it's going to be living exactly where we are talking about moving this money to in Other Expenses that would pay, not for someone to be on staff, but for the consulting services. You are going to see in the next budget this is one of the very rare areas in the city budget where we are going to have a full year accounted for both a state focused vendor which we have a contract that would be coming before the Council for their consideration once the funding source is established. But, also enough funding for the federal piece as well which is entirely separate. When this had been posted as a position a couple of years ago there were no takers for it. There had been conversations with perspective vendors who might be interested in doing this by way of a personal services contract and he was not convinced of their ability to generate the type of support that we need. His focus has been on trying to get it right rather than locking in the services of a company or an individual that would likely generate the return that we need. He would have loved for this to be taken care of sooner but the way that this is working they are trying to get it right and be intentional about finding the right person.

Councilor Valley asked if the Mayor has a company or not.

Mayor Beauregard said they went out for RFP and received three responses. He will not get into the ratings. The company that he will be bringing before Council was the best of the three. He is still not sold so that is why he has been hesitant to be rushing it to Council. We want to make sure we have the right selection, not just a selection. That is something he will have for Council to consider. He does not want to be fast about it just for the sake of being fast and wants to get it right.

Councilor Valley asked if there is a deadline for the transfer.

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Mayor Beauregard said it was already approved by the Council. Tonight, would be a second read. Either way, they need the funding to be in Other Expenses not in Personal Services where it is now because the idea is not to hire an actual individual to be on city's staff. It would have to be a consultant agreement. To facilitate that it would have to be in the correct part of the budget. This would allow them to do that. By the way, the funding is there. They want it in the best place considering their needs.

CAFO Duprey said the contract that would come from that RFP for the grant services would come before Council as well. They would have a chance to discuss. This is just to move it between Personal Services and Other Expenses. The actual expense would come via the contract that would come before Council for a separate vote.

Councilor Valley said her concern is, if we could not find someone part-time to do the job, how a consultant is going to do it for that amount of money. They charge per hour on commission for a grant. She asked if the funding is going to be enough.

Mayor Beauregard said as a point of reference, the City of Haverhill is paying for a consultant that is writing their state grants and they are paying a federal lobbying firm. Between what they are paying for the state consultant services plus the federal lobbying firm is pretty much \$150,000 which is what we are going to be looking at for the fiscal year 27 budget. This is enough to get us through the end of the fiscal year.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-44 A Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of \$40,000 from Free Cash to the General Fund Accounting Other Expense Budget Line to Fund Necessary Payroll Processing Expenditures (Requested by the Mayor and CAFO)

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-46 A Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance and Expenditure of a Brownfields Redevelopment Fund Grant from the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency in the Amount of \$75,000 (Requested by the Mayor and Director Wilson)

MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve.

Councilor Valley asked what happens with the grant if the property is sold.

Mayor Beauregard said when it comes to that specifically he would have to obtain that answer.

CAFO Duprey stated it is not attached to the property. I would be assigned to the City. If we were to sell it before the grant was complete, we would have to return the funds that we got.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

TR-26-47 Resolution Issuing a Letter of Support to Andrea Campbell for the State Auditor's Audit of the Legislature, as approved by the voters on Question 1 (Request of Clr. Pesce) MOTION BY: Councilor Valley, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve. UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Ordinance(s):

TO-26-13 An Ordinance Amending the Methuen Municipal Code, Section 4-1 (J) Nepotism (Req. of Chair Soto) (remove from the table) **(as amended)** No Action

New Business:

Resolutions:

Request of Councilor DiZoglio to reconsider TR-26-45 A Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of \$850,000 from Free Cash to Be Transferred to DPW Solid Waste Disposal Expenses to Fund Necessary Tipping Fee Expenditures (Requested by the Mayor and CAFO) (EPA REQUESTED)

Taken out of Order

TR-26-45 A Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of \$850,000 from Free Cash to Be Transferred to DPW Solid Waste Disposal Expenses to Fund Necessary Tipping Fee Expenditures (Requested by the Mayor and CAFO) (EPA REQUESTED)

Taken out of Order

TR-26-49 A Resolution Authorizing the City of Methuen to Participate in the Massachusetts Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE Massachusetts) (Requested by Mayor Beauregard and Director Wilson)

MOTION BY: Councilor Santos, seconded by Councilor Valley to approve.

Mayor Beauregard announced Connor from Mass Development is present to answer any questions.

Connor from the Green Finance Department here to advocate for the adoption of the PACE Massachusetts. PACE Massachusetts is an economic development tool for Massachusetts cities and towns to voluntarily join. It allows for commercial property owners to access financing for energy efficiency upgrades to existing buildings, for qualifying new construction. The financing is repaid via a Special Betterment Assessment, which would be placed on the property tax bill and for the benefits of PACE for the property owners, the reasons why they might want to pursue this over a traditional loan is PACE is a 20-year fixed term repayments. It is non-recourse financing and tied to the property itself. It is not tied to the borrower. If the property is sold with an active PACE loan that would transfer to the new owner. For towns and cities, benefit of the program is its economic development. You are allowing your commercial property owners to access this private financing, either for those energy efficiency upgrades or for the qualifying new construction project. If there is an existing structure, and these improvements end up increasing the property value of that property you can increase your property tax level from that. If it is a new construction project, you are helping to bring in jobs, a new property online and things like that. Essentially it is a collaboration between Mass Development, the city, and the capital providers for your commercial property owners too. So far, they have 82 communities that have adopted this program. That represents around 55% of available commercial real estate portfolio in the state. Methuen will be number 83 on that list.

Councilor Drew said he understands there is no obligation to the city to have any sort of funding. This is, I am a homeowner, I want to update something, or I am a business owner and want to utilize this. It is a mortgage that you are taking.

Conner said that is correct. It is all private financing. No public funds are used.

Councilor Drew said the implementation of the lien for this, that is on the city or is PACE handling this. He asked how that works.

Connor explained there is lien if there is a project that gets closed, the lien is first assigned to the city, then to Mass development and then to the capital provider that is providing the

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financing. Either the bank that is doing the deal or if it is a private fund, and then they hold on to that lien until the repayment is done, which is a 20-year amortization on that.

Councilor Drew asked about the financing component, when somebody is paying back there to it, it pays directly to you. "Does the city pay it? and then send a check to PACE?"

Connor said they engage a third-party payment. They are called Zions Bank. Once you make the collection from the property tax bill for the assessment, you would disperse it back to the capital provider.

Councilor Drew said it sounds like the city is going to have a slightly larger workload now that we are going to have to issue funding to that bank. He asked if that is going to be a significant workload to hinder what they currently have.

CAFO Duprey said it does not appear that way. The city would take in the loan like they do any lien. The only piece that would be additional would be paying that out and tracking it to make sure we have the tracking piece, as far as what's agreed to, what's approved, what's closed, making sure that we have that information in order to track that lien. The amount that we take in goes to them correctly. That is the piece that we need to finesse a little bit to make sure we have that down correctly. As far as the workload goes, it is part of what we take in liens the way that we do now. It is just that extra piece of having to send it out.

Councilor Drew said there could be a more labor-intensive portion to the city. There may be a small cost impact. This is a great program. It is what we need to help jumpstart some things. He wanted to identify that there is potential for some cost impact.

CAFO Duprey said she does not think there is a cost impact. But there is a manpower impact, a little bit.

Councilor Drew said a manpower impact, that person is an hourly rate, there is a cost to it.

Connor added their counsel prepares the entire repayment schedule. The amounts for all those assessments are all predetermined. It is something that city does not have to do on their own. Usually the city likes to have it align with their property tax cycle. Methuen is quarterly and would most likely follow that schedule. They would also engage a betterment assessment consultant there called Muni Cap right now. And that is something that Mass development pays for. They help with the billing and notification process if that is something that the city needs. That is a cost that Mass development absorbs. It would not be passed on to the city.

Councilor Marsan asked if there is a packet that we put together that we are going to have to give to any applicant to say, here is what we have that.

Mayor Beauregard explained there is a supporting packet attached to the agenda item from the PACE program.

Councilor Marsan just so we can roll it out to the businesses to say here is what we are offering.

Mayor Beauregard said this is something, if the Council can adopt it, the city would put this on the city website as a feature on the Economic and Community Development page.

Connor said they would share their marketing flyer as well.

Chair Soto said she has a list of frequently asked questions available. She asked if the maximum amount is up to \$500,000.

Connor said it is determined by the capital providers if they have a maximum. Some of them do not but most of them do have a minimum, the lowest minimum being \$250,000 financing for \$252.50.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Ordinances:

TO-26-11 An Ordinance Requiring Pest Control for Demolition, Site Clearing, and Commercial Waste Activities (Sponsored by Councilor Ryan DiZoglio)

MOTION BY: Councilor Drew, seconded by Councilor Santos to approve.

Councilor DiZoglio indicated he has been working on this since February with the Health Department. Working with Caeli on the school side with all the pest issues over there, there is still issues out in the community. He thanked Madam Chair Soto and Councilor Marsan for their input on this.

Caeli, Health Director, said when Councilor DiZoglio asked what needs to be addressed in the city. This is something that came up. Most recently there was a development that was built and the entire neighborhood around them kind of saw huge impacts from that with increasing rodent population. And while they said they were going to do certain things to mitigate that it was never really done and there were not any consequences. This codifies what they already have the ability to do and applies it evenly throughout any project that goes on in the community. And something that we kind of addressed through Councilor Marsan's concerns was making sure that the way we worded it was that it is appropriate and effective. This means appropriate in the sense that not every project is going to require the type of pest control that another project might so they would have to work with the Board of Health to make sure that the project that they are doing has the appropriate pest control rather than saying everyone needs pest control no matter what.

Councilor Simard asked if the builder is not in compliance, like the one you stated, could it affect their bond. "Could the city take the funds from their bond before we give it back?"

Caeli indicated that is not something that was done in the past. Maybe now that this is in writing in a better way, that is something we could do.

Councilor Simard said that would be a good idea because what recourse is there because they built a development, got their money, and they are on their way. That may be something we want to do in the future.

Councilor Marsan commented we want to make sure we capture the large-scale developments. Not every person that is doing a small-scale commercial job. If there are no rodents involved. You are doing one commercial building, a standalone building, and it is not susceptible to any rodents and you're not disturbing much ground, he wanted to make sure of that so that's why it says where applicable. Then again, if you are in a mall and you are doing something and there is a restaurant, it is applicable. There are many circumstances where it is good, and we have got to be careful on other ones. The Inspection department will have the leeway to say this one is applicable and this one is not is what we need.

Chair Soto said her suggestion was about notice which she appreciates being added. When contractors come into Inspectional Services, sometimes we are assuming that they know the process and then they come back and say, "I wasn't aware that this municipality required this". Notice to them that this was going to be required was important.

UPON VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Any Other Business for the Good and Welfare of the Community

Councilor Marsan said two small businesses opened within the last week. Amore Juice Bar is on 46 Hampshire Street where they do smoothies, herbal teas, and wellness drinks. Last Sunday "Let the Fur Fly" there is a pet grooming business at 12 Baldwin Street.

METHUEN CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Monday, May 4th, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

GREAT HALL, SEARLES BUILDING

Councilor DiZoglio thanked Chair Soto and everyone for the birthday wishes from everybody tonight.

Councilor DiZoglio said he did not like some of the comments made at the podium tonight. Some of them may have to do with his comments. He managed to work with a lot of people here and he appreciates it. What is frustrating is that we are all capable of running the city if we just communicate. We are all able to do this job and not one person should get the brunt of everything but at the same time we could all do better. That is what he was trying to say and hopefully people take that in stride.

Chair Soto announced Methuen Police Officers Annual Memorial Service will be Thursday, May 14th, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. An invitation was sent to the Council from the Chief.

Chair Soto adjourned the meeting.

I do hereby certify the foregoing minutes were approved by the City Council by a unanimous vote on May 18, 2026.

Linda Gagnon

COUNCIL CLERK